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MOVIE REVIEW | 'MY REINCARNATION'

Higher Calling? It's the Family Business

By DANIEL M. GOLD

Films like Martin Scorsese's "[Kundun](#)" and Bernardo Bertolucci's "[Little Buddha](#)" acquainted American audiences with the Tibetan Buddhist belief that the souls of great lamas are reincarnated in newborns, who must be identified and then schooled to fulfill their destinies as spiritual teachers. But what happens if a designated youngster rejects that call?

Jennifer Fox's remarkable documentary "[My Reincarnation](#)" follows one such individual over the course of 20 years, only to find that destiny will have its way. In the late 1980s Ms. Fox ("[An American Love Story](#)") served as the secretary of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, a master of the Dzogchen tradition of Buddhism who has lived in Italy for a half-century and built a teaching and spiritual center there, and was permitted to film it. His Westernized son, [Yeshe](#), has been acknowledged since he was 5 to be the reincarnation of his father's uncle Khyentse, [a great Dzogchen master](#) himself. Yeshe, though, in his late teens, strongly rebuffs a life expected by others, including his father, to whom he does not feel especially close.

Ms. Fox returned 13 years later, filming off and on until about 2009. Yeshe — now in his 30s with a family of his own and a career in information-technology management — has, through dreams and visions, a slow but insistent spiritual awakening. When he finally travels to Tibet, he is met by hundreds of Khyentse's followers, some of whom have hungered for his arrival for decades.

These are among the film's most successful scenes; others include those outlining the casual, ordinary home life of a Tibetan master. Still, an awful lot is packed into a bit more than 80 minutes — Yeshe's journey, his father's history, the growth of the Dzogchen movement, samples of Buddhist teachings — and the parts don't always cohere. So the father-and-son story wins out.

Especially in the early footage, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu is an engaging, charismatic figure; by the end, Yeshe is finding his own footing, able to relate to a young, wired-in audience. "My Reincarnation" makes a pretty strong case: when the family business is enlightenment, listen to your dad.



HANNOVER HOUSE

All's Faire in Love

Opens on Friday nationwide.
Directed by Scott Marshall
1 hour 44 minutes

A backstage comedy set at one of those summer Renaissance fairs? Sure, that could work, given a savvy, "Shakespeare in Love" sort of script and actors skilled in comic subtlety. "All's Faire in Love," unfor-

Christina Ricci and Owen Benjamin in "All's Faire in Love," a backstage comedy directed by Scott Marshall.

Film in Review

unately, has neither and, under Scott Marshall's direction, ends up as a hodgepodge without a unifying tone.

The movie, which turned up at some film festivals in 2009, features as its female lead Christina Ricci, of the new television series "Pan Am," which may explain why it is resurfacing. She plays Kate, who, as the film opens, gets the heebie-jeebies during an interview for some Wall Streetish job and bolts, choosing instead to indulge her theatrical dreams at a Renaissance fair.

Also finding himself there is Will (Owen Benjamin, who was engaged to Ms. Ricci for a time), a college quarterback sent to

the fair by a professor. Will and Kate meet each other, and the dramatic talent shows and val factions among the

The script, by Michael White, doesn't come off as particularly funny, which is a pity, since the movie is too hard. Only a few scenes, including one with the reigning queen, are

"All's Faire in Love" is a backstage comedy directed by Scott Marshall. *strongly cautioned against cleavage and mil-*

My Reincarnation

Opens on Friday in New York and Los Angeles.
Directed by Jennifer Fox
1 hour 22 minutes; not rated

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LUGI OTTAVIANI/LONG SHOT FACTORY

Yeshe Namkhai in Jennifer Fox's "My Reincarnation."



From left, Jodi Lin, Shing Ka and Matthew Chiu in Preston Miller's "God's Land," a commune of Taiwanese immigrants in Texas that is waiting to be delivered to heaven.

God's Land

Opens on Friday in Manhattan.
Directed by Preston Miller
2 hours 45 minutes; not rated

It has been a season of cults and extreme religious visions: Vera Farmiga wrestles with faith in "Higher Ground," and Elizabeth Olsen escapes a charismatic leader's grip in "Martha Marcy May Marlene." In Preston Miller's dramedy "God's Land," a commune of Taiwanese immigrants in Garland, Tex., waits for a spaceship to descend and deliver it to the promised land. Or dimension, rather.

Xiu (Jodi Lin), a former medical student, has dutifully followed her husband, Ming-Tien (Shing Ka), there from Taipei with their son, Ollie (Matthew Chiu). Her agonized ambivalence drives the movie, which often soft-pedals mind control's abuse, playing it uneasily at times for chuckles.

The group's Svengali, Teacher Chen (Jackson

Ning, opaque but vaguely menacing), is seen in view airplanes overhead. Teacher Chen wears a ring that he claims to have powers. Though the movie holds, it imposes dietary restrictions and other forms of his subjects (and the movie). Teacher Chen doesn't seem to be in control or conduct the saturation of the Jonestown, Guyana, or the Gate compounds. In the end, he announces the coming conference, the news relatives go on a suicide mission.

Wayne Chang, as Teacher Chen's son, has an unsettlingly beautiful presence. Shing is poignant when he says that you have the ability to change. But Mr. Miller is far too slow, spending too much time — with a sometimes fatal cost of